

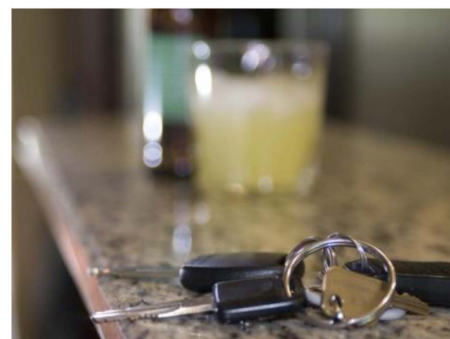


## Dangerous Driving Hazards

There are many road hazards you might face while driving. Be it bad weather, road work or bumper to bumper traffic, and there are things you may do that can make these hazards worse. Impaired driving can include many things but is often characterized by drinking and driving. However, it can also be the result of taking medication that makes you fatigued or simply driving without the proper amount of rest. It is up to you to make the responsible decision on when you are able to drive, legally and safely.

### Drinking and Driving

[Excessive alcohol use](#) is preventable and should never be a reason for impaired driving. Know your limits when it comes to drinking and how alcohol affects you, your judgment and your ability to drive. Never drive after you have been [drinking](#) and always have a designated, non-drinking, driver or a plan to get home such as a rideshare before you begin drinking. [Don't wreck](#) your life, your family or your career by drinking and driving.



*Photo courtesy of the CDC*

### Mixing Medications

Depending on how a medication affects you, driving after taking certain prescription drugs can be just as dangerous as drinking and driving. Some medications can make you drowsy, as well as impair judgment and reaction times. [Mixing alcohol and medication](#) can also cause serious adverse effects and you should take every precaution not to drive if you accidentally mix the two. According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), even the smallest amounts of medication and alcohol can produce negative effects and if you are in an accident you could be charged with driving under the influence. As with preparing for a night out drinking, if you are prescribed a medication that could affect your ability to drive, be sure to set up a safe ride to your destination.

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#### Did You Know?

Twenty-nine people in the U.S. die in car accidents that involve alcohol - impaired driving per day. That is one death every 50 minutes and attributes to an annual cost of more than \$44 billion.

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### Drowsy Driving

The risk of driving while fatigued has become an issue in the U.S. To avoid [driving drowsy](#) and decrease your risk of clouded judgement, you should have seven to eight hours of sleep before your trip, not drive during your normal sleep times and avoid taking any medication that might make you drowsy. If you find yourself feeling drowsy, try drinking coffee for a temporary pick-me-up to increase alertness or you can pull over for a 20-minute nap in a well-lit, safe area.

### Additional Resources

- Visit NMCPHC [health promotion toolbox](#) for more resources on impaired driving prevention.
- [Click here](#) for information on distracted driving from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

